IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (Previously Presented) A separating apparatus for time divlsion multiplexed signal light, which is input with time division multiplexed signal light obtained by multiplexing a plurality of signal lights on a time axis, and guides said time division multiplexed signal light, respectively, to a first optical gate section in which the transmittance thereof is periodically changed in accordance with a repetition frequency of "n" times a bit rate of a signal light of said plurality of signal lights (n is a positive integer excluding 1), and to a second optical gate section connected in series to said first optical gate section, in which the transmittance thereof is periodically changed in accordance with a repetition frequency equal to the bit rate of said signal light of the plurality of signal lights, to separate at least one signal light included in said time division multiplexed signal light on the time axis,

wherein said first optical gate section comprises; a first optical modulator in which an optical transmission characteristic thereof with respect to a drive voltage is periodically changed, and a first drive circuit that supplies to said first optical modulator a drive signal having a repetition frequency equal to the bit rate of said signal light of the plurality of signal lights, and having the voltage magnitude corresponding to a voltage difference in an n/2 period in the periodic optical transmission characteristic of said first optical modulator.

2. (original) A separating apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein said first optical modulator is a Mach-Zehnder optical modulator.

3. (original) A separating apparatus according to claim 2,
wherein said Mach-Zehnder optical modulator is constructed using a substrate made of lithium niobate.

4. (original) A separating apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising;
a polarization control section that controls a polarization state of the time division multiplexed signal light input to said Mach-Zehnder optical modulator, to be constant.